

AN
HISTORICAL OUTLINE
OF
ALL SAINTS' PARISH, RHAWNHRUST
1838 — 1958

"The One Hundred Twentieth Anniversary of this Parish's
Admission into Union with the Diocese of Pennsylvania."

Compiler: Ronald Clarkson, Vestryman (1957-1960)

Special acknowledgments to the Reverend Thomas Parker, D.D., Rector of St. Paul's Memorial Church, Philadelphia for much information on the historical background of All Saints' during its ministry in South Philadelphia; and to Mrs. Ervin Peoples, organist of Ascension Mission, Rhawnhurst from 1931 to 1951, who made available her personal collection of literature, clippings and historical data, without which it would have been much more difficult to prepare this text.

Note: A more permanent "Historical Outline," in booklet and pictorial form, will be printed at a later date. In the meantime additions and corrections are invited. Please use the last page for your suggestions, noting the page or pages of this text to which you refer, sending the same to the Parish Office, 1811 Loney Street, Philadelphia 11, Pennsylvania.

All Saints' Church originated through the establishment of a Sunday School. A question from a little girl's lips awakened the idea. One Sunday morning in February, 1827, Miss Ann Ritchie, a member of St. Peter's Parish, was on her way to Sunday School, when near Twelfth and Shippen Streets she was stopped by the little girl with the question, "Please tell me where I can go to Sunday School?" These few words prompted her to seek the aid of friends to start a school in that neighborhood. Mrs. Mary Gurney was appealed to and after thinking the matter over and learning of the spiritual destitution prevailing in the neighborhood, accompanied Miss Ritchie in search of scholars.

On March 18, 1827, the school was opened, with six teachers from St. Peter's Church, who were gratified with the presence of twenty scholars. They assembled in the lower part of a house on Shippen Lane, which was rented at four dollars per month. All necessary furniture was donated by Mrs. Gurney. The Sunday School held two sessions, but, as there was no Episcopal Church in the vicinity, the teachers were obliged to close their exercises in time to reach their place of worship. Owing to some difficulty with the landlord, the first meeting place was abandoned after a few months and the classes moved to Cherry Grove, where Mrs. Gurney offered them the use of her large parlor. As the parents of the scholars seldom attended any place of worship, measures were taken to secure the services of a clergyman. This object was made known to the Reverend Jackson Kemper and met with his approval. He, with other clergymen, held services in Mrs. Gurney's parlor one evening in the week. Occasionally the clergy would visit the school. The first sermon preached on a Sunday was by Bishop William White, first Bishop of Pennsylvania.

About this period the Society for the Advancement of Christianity in Pennsylvania came to the aid of the mission, and for about ten years extended its fostering care. The Reverend William Bryant, Missionary in Moyamensing, "resolved, with the approval of the Committee of Missions, to devote his whole time to this whitening field." It was believed that a large congregation would attend the evening services if held in the populated neighborhood, and Mr. William Moore offered the use of his house. The prospects of this station depended, he said, "upon the erection of a building for the use of the school, and which may be used as a place of worship." His hope was soon realized, and a humble but substantial tabernacle was erected at the Northwest corner of Shippen Lane and Fitzwater Street. The building was two-story frame.

The 14th of February, 1830 was memorable in the history as it marks the close of the "parlor services" and the commencement of work in the "Moyamensing Sunday School House." The history of the parish from this time to the laying of the corner-stone of the church is a record of trials and disappointments. Upon the organization of the parish by the election of a Vestry in 1836, the Reverend William Bryant was elected Rector. He did valiant work for the Master. In 1838, All Saints' Mission was admitted to the Diocese of Pennsylvania as a parish. In 1845 the Reverend Henry Major was elected Rector. It was during his rectorship that a charter was secured.

The Ladies' Missionary Society of All Saints' Church saw the need of erecting a church that should endure for generations, and desired that the new building be placed at the corner of Broad and Fitzwater Streets, but after a great deal of deliberation the Vestry selected the site at 12th and Fitzwater Streets. The corner-stone of the edifice was laid by Bishop Alonzo Potter on April 15, 1846. The new edifice was forty-two feet wide by eighty feet deep, built of stone in rubble work and pointed. The Reverend Henry Major resigned and was succeeded by the Reverend Henry Montgomery.

On Sunday, January 17, 1847, the congregation, being too large for their mission building, gladly hastened into their new church, the Bishop confirming seventeen persons on the afternoon of the same day. The walls were unplastered, the roof unceiled and the cold blast of winter whistling through the crevices, made the church anything but comfortable. The building was subsequently finished by the proceeds from a fair, and was consecrated by Bishop Potter on January 27, 1848.

As the congregation and Sunday School continued to increase, an enlargement was necessary. The corner-stone was redeposited in the northeast corner of the transept on June 6, 1853. The church was reopened by Bishop Potter on Sunday afternoon, May 28, 1854. All Saints' Church was cruciform without the chancel recess. The nave and chancel together were one hundred feet deep and forty-two feet in width, while the transepts were twenty-six feet wide and twenty-three and one-half feet in depth. A gallery was located at the west end of the church. The basement was divided into four spacious rooms, which were appropriated to the uses of the schools, Bible-class, library and Vestry. The organ was purchased in November, 1857 for \$1500. The northern entrance was erected in 1882 to the loving memory of Emma Boyd Greer. After the resignation of Mr. Montgomery, in 1855, there was a succession of four short rectorships. In May, 1867, the Reverend H.L. Duhring became Rector of the parish. He was a leading clergyman of his day, being also the Dean of the Convocation of Southeast Philadelphia and later Superintendent of the City Mission. During his rectorship All Saints' Church reached the summit of its power and influence. Dr. Duhring served the parish until May 30, 1895.

Following this rectorship, steady changes in population made it seem wise to the Vestry and congregation to sell the property to the Greek Orthodox Community.

In the meantime, in the year 1890, a church was established by the authority of the Southeast Convocation. The name of this church was the Church of the Holy Spirit. The first service was held July 6, 1890 in Farley's, now known as Doaks Hall, located at Passyunk Avenue and Moore Street. The Reverend Samuel H. Boyer was minister-in-charge. Later a house was rented at 11th and Snyder Avenue and within a year (1891) because of the dedication and vigor of the congregation, they were able to build a Parish House. It was occupied on All Saints' Day, 1891. From 1890 to 1908 under the vigorous leadership of its Rector, the church grew and the spirit of the people grew with it.

All Saints' Church seeing the opportunity to continue to witness for Christ in the same Convocation merged in 1909 with the Church of the Holy Spirit. The merged parish was named All Saints', Moyamensing, now located at 11th and Snyder Avenue. The Rector was a young clergyman, the Reverend John E. Hill. While rector of All Saints', Mr. Hill served also as Dean of the South Philadelphia Convocation and Mrs. Hill as President of the Diocesan Woman's Auxiliary. It was said that he brought with him a new vision - a desire to work with the new social agency called St. Martha's House. Under Mr. Hill's wise leadership and the help of Mrs. Hill, the close relationship of the church and the settlement house brought hope, joy and zeal to the hearts of the people in South Philadelphia. The Church School, under Mr. William Irwin's superintendency, numbered upwards of 500 and was somewhat of a model in the Diocese. During his rectorship several young men from this parish entered the priesthood to carry out the teachings they received in the church and church school of this strong parish.

As was the case with All Saints' at 12th and Fitzwater Streets, a population trend and the movement of the majority of communicants to other parts of the city and out of the State seemed to make it necessary to seek out another suitable location in order to continue the work of Christ which All Saints' had so faithfully carried out over the past 111 years. So again the roots of All Saints' were transplanted.

On June 1, 1949, All Saints' Parish, Moyamensing was merged with Ascension Mission, Rhawnhurst, under the corporate name of -

All Saints' Parish, Rhawnhurst.

The events leading up to this important decision in which we are now sharing are very interesting.

Following the construction of a trolley line connecting Frankford and Bustleton in the Northeast section of Philadelphia, rapid development ensued. The region north of Dettman Avenue was a region of truck farms and open spaces with the exception of a few houses here and there.

Real estate men were buying up large parcels of land along Castor Road for future development. Soon came municipal improvements and extensive building operations under such names as Castor Highlands, Griffith Manor, etc. All of these separate developments later became known as Rhawnhurst.

In the home of Mr. Irvin H. Bauer, affectionately known as "Pop Bauer", a Sunday School was started. Thanks to his eloquent pleas, the matter of establishing a Mission in Rhawnhurst was brought to the attention of the Germantown Convocation by the Reverend Paul Micou. There followed a survey by the convocation and diocesan officials under the direction of the Rt. Rev. Thomas J. Garland, Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania.

In January, 1926, the meeting of the Convocation of Germantown advised the purchase of land in Rhawnhurst, the present site of All Saints', situated on Frontenac Street between Loney and Ripley Streets. The dimensions being 250 feet on Frontenac Street and 225 feet deep on Loney and Ripley Streets.

The site was purchased by the Diocesan Authorities on May 22, 1926, at a cost of \$17,750.00. It was felt that this piece of land, one of the highest points in the neighborhood and being perfectly level, was ideally suitable for a mission, a future church and church buildings. At the time of purchase it was merely a portion of a field with stakes in the ground marking where the future streets were to be located.

The Diocese lost no time in establishing a mission and on June 10, 1926, the Reverend Paul Micou, Rector of St. Luke's Memorial Church, Bustleton, was appointed priest-in-charge.

On October 3, 1926, the first service was held in the home of Mr. Alexander McWade; other homes used for services on Sunday afternoons were those of Messrs. Irvin Peoples, Thomas Grime and Irvin H. Bauer.

At this time there were about twenty church families in the community and in these families some twenty-five children. Of financial assistance was the grant of \$3,196.00 from the Church Extension Fund in October of 1926, being increased by the Bishop's Bricks Fund in Advent.

Quoting from the Church Extension, October 1926 -

"About this time the Methodist communion are organizing a small congregation in a new temporary building just a block away from the diocesan site and the Presbyterians have purchased a lot a few blocks south on Loretto Avenue but so far have not formed a congregation.

The Shriner's Hospital for Crippled Children on the Roosevelt Boulevard, north of Pennypack Circle, was opened last June and the Baptist Home for the Aged is nearing completion. Other institutions no doubt will seek locations along the boulevard. With a mission in actual operation, ministering to the present community and prepared to welcome newcomers, together with our own families in Rhawnhurst giving their cooperation, it is believed the future gives every promise for the church to achieve a strong position in Rhawnhurst."

To the younger people in our present congregation it is probably difficult for them to realize just what Rhawnhurst looked like in those days and the directions necessary in order for people to find the homes where the afternoon services were to be held.

The following is an excerpt from a notice sent out by the Reverend Paul Micou in November, 1926.

"On Sunday next, November 14, we begin a four weeks' stay at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Peoples, Faunce and Horrocks Streets,

or since these streets are not completed yet, we had better say, one block east of Bustleton Pike on the road next to Afton Street. The house is a three story frame building at the end of the road. Those coming by trolley can get off at Roberts' Lane and cross through by a path. Sunday School is at 3 P.M. and the service at 4 P.M.

The mission has as its temporary officers Mr. Thomas Grime, 1910 Lansing St., Treasurer, and Mr. Irvin Bauer, Longshore Ave., Secretary. We gladly welcome all who care to throw their lot in with us."

In January, 1927 a meeting of the Convocation of Germantown appointed a building committee with power to act in conjunction with the Diocese. Plans and specifications were prepared by Frank R. Watson, Edkins & Thompson, Architects, for the Mission building.

On September 26, 1927 the contract was awarded to Mr. Roy Randall of Jenkintown, the lowest bidder and construction was started toward the end of October, 1927.

On November 26, 1927, the corner-stone was laid by the Right Reverend Thomas J. Garland, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese, assisted by the Reverend Paul Micou, the Dean of the Convocation, Reverend A.R. Van Meter, neighboring clergy and about 100 people. Within the stone were placed a piece of money of this year's coining and a journal of the diocese.

On March 22, 1928 a meeting was held in St. Luke's Hall, Bustleton, at which time the congregation was organized and a petition was signed requesting recognition as a mission of the Diocese. This petition was favorably recommended to the Bishop at the May, 1928 meeting of the Convocation of Germantown and passed by the June meeting of the standing committee.

It was named the "Mission of the Ascension" on Easter Day, April 8, 1928; the first services were held in the new mission building - Holy Communion at 9:30 A.M. and Evening Prayer at 7:45 P.M.

On April 13, 1928, an opening reception was held for the community with greetings by the neighboring clergy and on April 15, the Church School was organized and regular sessions began.

The total cost of the basement type building amounted to \$13,971.00. Many churches, organizations and members of the congregation contributed the furnishings and supplies to equip the Mission.

September 30, 1928 was the last service for the Reverend Paul Micou who accepted a call to Fall River, Mass. and under his direction the mission had grown from just a few to some 90 communicants. The Reverend James McClintock was appointed missionary in his place and took charge at the evening service on October 7, 1928.

In November, 1928, Frontenac Street was cut through and paved, and at the same time pavement, curbing and gutters were laid around the Mission.

On Easter Day, 1929, the first anniversary of the Mission, the offering amounted to \$132.53.

Sometime in April, 1929, Loney Street was paved.

During these formative years it is interesting to note that the Vestry Meetings were held in the boiler room in order to conserve fuel; these men were affectionately referred to by the congregation as the "Ash Pit Vestry."

In March and April of 1931, the terrace was graded, the driveway made, a well dug and drain pipes laid by 20 unemployed men from the Emergency Work Bureau. This was the period of the great depression, the community and the congregation in common with the rest of the country were feeling the effects. The congregation had a hard time meeting expenses.

Despite the many hardships and problems which beset the Mission, it had shown steady growth and the basement facilities were taxed to the limit. The Beginners Class was held in the kitchen, the Men's Bible Class in the wood shed, which also served as a dressing room for the Choir. The furniture of the Chancel had to be removed during the week to provide room for a stage and various activities and then set up again for the Sunday services.

It was very evident at this time, despite the depression and lack of funds, that there was an urgent need for expansion, primarily an upper floor for a chapel in which to worship, thus making the basement facilities available entirely for church activities.

In the April Issue (1932) of the Church Extension Fund, the Right Reverend Francis M. Taitt, the Bishop of the Diocese, commented favorably on the good and faithful work which the congregation of Ascension Mission had accomplished. He recommended to the Germantown Convocation and the Department of Missions that the proceeds of the Church Extension Fund be devoted toward the building of a second story for the Chapel of the Ascension - Rhawnhurst, and issued an earnest appeal for funds to carry out this worthy project. We who have seen Rhawnhurst grow during the past thirty years can readily appreciate the exceptional foresight of Bishop Taitt at that time. From the April, 1932 Issue of the Church Foundation, the Bishop spoke thus - "There can be no doubt of a large population in the near future. We must be ready for it when it comes. The foundation of the Mission has been well laid, we must keep the structure intact."

On May 31, 1934, the Reverend James McClintock resigned as Priest-in-charge and for a period of one year, Mr. Melville Gurley served as Lay-Reader-in-charge of the Mission. In May, 1935 he was ordained a Deacon and assigned to Old Swedes Church.

On May 1, 1935, the Reverend George L. Gibbs was appointed by the Bishop to make a survey of the Mission and conduct the services. On January 1, 1936 he was appointed Vicar-in-charge. The dwelling which he occupied, 1908 Stanwood Street, was purchased by the Diocese and designated as the Rectory for the Mission. The Reverend Mr. Gibbs served for 12 years until his retirement on February 1, 1948.

The Reverend Albert Fisher, Jr., Rector of St. Mark's Frankford was then appointed by the Rt. Reverend Oliver Hart to serve as Priest-in-charge until June 1948, his Curate, the Reverend E. Clarendon Hyde conducting services.

June 1, 1949 was the momentous day in the history of Ascension Mission, referred to earlier, for it was on this day that the Rt. Reverend Oliver Hart, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese approved the decision to merge "All Saints", Moyamensing" with "Ascension Mission, Rhawnhurst." A new charter was created and the new church was incorporated under the name of "All Saints' Parish, Rhawnhurst." Again the roots of All Saints' were transplanted. The Reverend Arthur L.M. Worthey, the Rector of All Saints', Moyamensing, continued as Rector of the newly created parish.

Plans to complete the church building and build a rectory adjoining the church were formulated. A sum of \$50,000.00 was allocated for the church building. The Architect was William Heyl Thompson, A.I.A. and the builder, Joseph R. Farrell & Son.

The corner-stone was laid on December 3, 1950 with the Rt. Reverend Oliver J. Hart officiating, assisted by Albert T. Eyer, Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, F & A.M., the Rector, the Reverend Arthur L.M. Worthey and many other clergy of the Diocese. The guest speaker was the Honorable Bernard Samuel, Mayor of Philadelphia, who was a member of the parish when the church was situated at 11th and Snyder Avenue, South Philadelphia.

The dedication ceremonies marking the completion of the new church building, new pews and new organ, took place on Sunday afternoon, September 30, 1951, again the Rt. Reverend Oliver J. Hart, Bishop of the Diocese officiating, assisted by the Reverend Edmund Wood, Dean of the Convocation of Germantown and the Reverend Arthur L.M. Worthey, the Rector, many other clergy of the diocese and civic leaders from all over the city. The Bishop preached to a capacity congregation of 250 people. One of the highlights of this impressive ceremony being when the Bishop knocked on the outside door of the church saying "Open me the gates of righteousness, that I may go into them and give thanks unto the Lord," and the Rector's Warden replied, "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it." Thereupon the door was opened, the Bishop and clergy preceded by the crucifer and the choir processed into the church.

The entire project involved an outlay of \$70,000.00.

The new rectory adjoining the church was started in the Fall of 1952 and was completed in the Spring of 1953, at a cost of \$32,000.00. The Architect was G. Harold Murphy, and the builder was Christ Gigliotti.

The Reverend Mr. Worthey continued as Rector until May, 1957 at which time he accepted a call to St. Paul's Church, Huntington, Conn.

In October, 1957 the present Rector, the Reverend Edward B. Pollanick, accepted the call to All Saints' and was instituted by the Rt. Reverend Oliver J. Hart on All Saints' Day, November 1, 1957. Under his vigorous leadership the congregation now numbers 307 members and upwards of 140 attending the church school.

Several additions and improvements adding beauty and dignity to the Sanctuary have been made during the year 1958 to date. The walls have been freshly painted; the floors sanded and refinished; the main aisle and chancel covered with rich red carpeting; and through the generosity of the Chapel of the Holy Comforter, Aronimink, All Saints' became the recipients of six beautiful handcrafted copper lantern-type hanging ceiling lights. The stairway, north and side windows which were of plain glass have been replaced with amber glass, greatly reducing the glare of the sun during the summer months and adding to the comfort of the congregation. All of these windows have been installed as Memorials. Additional Memorials made possible the acquisition and installation of a magnificent stained glass window, often referred to as the "Bishop White Window", in memory of the first Bishop of this Diocese and the Episcopal Church's first Presiding Bishop. This window, valued at approximately \$15,000.00 was originally part of St. James Church, 22nd and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia. When this church was demolished the window was carefully crated and transferred to the Episcopal Academy for installation in their proposed new chapel. However, after many years of storage, a change of plans by the Academy and Bishop Hart, made it possible for All Saints' to acquire this beautiful window. Because of its size only the center portion of the window is being used, the balance stored for future use. A special stool frame was constructed and the window installed by Willits of Philadelphia in the South wall, over the Altar. Truly a wonderful addition to our church.

In addition to serving the religious needs of the community, All Saints' fulfills many civic duties serving as headquarters for a Girl Scout Troop, a Cub Pack, Scout Troop and Explorer Post and the Rhawnhurst Brotherhood, a non-sectarian group for men of the community. Many of our congregation serve as officers of the respective organizations.

In true Christian spirit our facilities have been from time to time at the disposal of several neighborhood groups of the Jewish Faith as a meeting place during the early stages of their congregational organization.

Our Parish Hall served as an emergency center during the severe snow and ice storm of February, 1958. Hundreds of families in the Northeast were without heat and light due to broken power lines.

All of this clearly indicates the obvious interest in their community and devotion to their church with which the organizations and members of All Saints' regard their parish.

Therefore, in our prayers let us offer thanks to the Lord for the blessings He has bestowed on All Saints' for the past one hundred and twenty years and that our present Rector and congregation may continue to receive His divine guidance, that this good and faithful work may be carried on for many years to come.

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O God, Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful, visit, we pray thee, this Parish and Congregation with thy love and favour; enlighten our minds more and more with the light of the everlasting Gospel; graft in our hearts a love of the truth; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and of thy great mercy keep us in the same, O blessed Spirit, whom, with the Father and the Son together, we worship and glorify as one God, world without end. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, bless, we pray thee, our work for the extension of thy kingdom, and make us so thankful for the precious gift to us of thy beloved Son, that we may pray fervently, labor diligently, and give liberally to make him known to all nations as their Saviour and their King: through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.

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ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF ALL SAINTS'
PARISH, RHAWNURST, FORMERLY MOYAMENSING. TO BE RETURNED TO THE
CHURCH OFFICE, FRONTENAC AND LONEY STREETS, PHILADELPHIA 11, PA.

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